[English]

Target of Telecom

1132 DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government have been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Telecom department not even halfway near target' appearing in the 'The Economic Times' dated 1 October, 1996;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the target fixed for the current financial year;

(d) the number of telephone lines provided during the last six months;

(e) the reasons for lagging behind the target; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to meet the fixed target?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is normal that achievements during the first two quarters of an year is comparatively less and it picks up during the third and fourth quarter. The achievement upto 31st October' 96 is 29.83% of the annual target.

(c) The target fixed for the current financial year for providing telephone connctions is 24.5 lakhs.

(d) 6.299 lakh telephone lines were provided from 1.4.96 to 30.9.96.

(e) and (f) Most of the equipments reach the sites during the second and third quarters of the year.

Material supply is being watched and the progress in achievement is being monitored more closely. The overall target is likely to be achieved.

Catering Facilities

1133 SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of stations and pairs of trains having the catering facilities, State-wise;

(b) the number of stations having catering services provided by private contractors and Railway Department units separately, State-wise;

(c) the number of new trains in which catering services have been introduced during 1995-96 and 1996-97 till date;

(d) the sales turnover of catering units during the above period;

(e) whether the Government propose to award the catering contracts to unemployed youths in the country particularly in Orissa, and

(f) if so, the details thereof.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Catering facilities are available at 3152 stations and 133 pairs of trains. State-wise data is not maintained.

(b) Catering services are provided departmentally at 102 stations and at 3050 stations these are managed by private contractors.

(c) Catering services have been introduced on 15 pairs of trains during 1995-96 and on 4 pairs of trains on 1996-97.

(d) Sales turnover of departmental catering units during 1995-96 was Rs. 144.08 crores and during 1996-97 (upto August 1996) is Rs. 70.24 crores.

(e) Catering policy provides for award of catering contracts to reputed and professional caterers.

(f) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Adequate Lodging Facilities to Foreign Tourists

1134 SHRI N.J. RATHWA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken up by the Union Government for providing adequate lodging facilities to foreign tourists in Gujarat;

(b) whether the Union Government have evaluated the arrivals of Foreign tourists in the current year; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) Sir, Construction of hotels is mainly a private sector activity. At present there are 38 hotels in the approved sector functioning in 15 cities of Gujarat totalling 1960 rooms and 38 approved hotel projects spread over 20 cities of Gujarat which on completion will add 1636 rooms.

To encourage investment in this Sector, the Government is extending various incentives and Tax concessions.

(b) and (c) The foreign tourist arrivals in India from January to October, 1996 were 17,73,930 with an increase of 7.6% over the corresponding period of preceding year.

Rewa-Singrauli Railway Line

1135 SHRI SUKH LAL KUSHWAHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to start construction work on Rewa-Singrauli rail line for which the survey has already been completed;